

HIV/AIDS REVIEW

A Newsletter from the HIV/AIDS BUREAU AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Expanded Mass Health Coverage for People living with HIV infection in Massachusetts

“Reach For It, Get Tested. Get Care.” was the message from the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) as it launched new MassHealth coverage available for low and moderate income people living with HIV infection on April 1, 2001. The MassHealth expansion improves access to health care early in the course of HIV infection.



What is MassHealth?

The expansion in MassHealth coverage was made possible through the collaboration of DMA with the HIV/AIDS Bureau of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, other AIDS service organizations, consultants from academic medical centers, and consumers and consumer advocates in the development of a proposal to get a waiver of existing federal guidelines for coverage. The case for the waiver was made through analysis of HIV/AIDS prevalence, estimates of stages of disease among Massachusetts residents living with HIV infection, data on health care utilization and the application of models that clearly demonstrated the benefits of expanded access to care.

MassHealth is the state program that pays for health care for people living in Massachusetts who have medium, low or no income. MassHealth provides coverage for comprehensive health care, including doctor and clinic visits, medications, hospitalization, x-rays, laboratory tests, mental health services, other medical services, dental services, eyeglasses, substance abuse treatment services. Prior to April 2001, people living with HIV infection were eligible for MassHealth coverage only if they were disabled by AIDS or some other condition, and had income at 133% or less of the federal poverty level. Now, under the expanded Massachusetts coverage, anyone who is HIV positive, under 65 years of age, not institutionalized, with income up to 200% of federal poverty level (\$17,184/year for one person, \$35,304/year for a family of four) is eligible. Individuals may be eligible whether or not they work and even if they have other health insurance.

Look for MassHealth

Developments in primary and specialty health care for people living with HIV/AIDS have greatly enhanced length and quality of life. Expanded MassHealth coverage for people living with HIV infection is a great advance in assuring access to quality health care early in the course of disease. However, health care services are not the only services that people living with HIV infection need. The Department of Public Health and its partners in the community are working closely with DMA and health care providers to link people with a spectrum of DPH-funded and community-based care, support and prevention services. These services include case management, counseling, medication, management assistance, transportation, housing assistance, home health care, child care and respite services.

Application for MassHealth involves filling out a Medical Benefit Request (MBR) and submitting any necessary documentation, including proof of HIV infection status. All information is kept strictly confidential under state and federal law. See the accompanying box entitled "How to Apply for MassHealth Coverage and Get Other Services" for more information about applying for MassHealth.

The MassHealth coverage expansion for people living with HIV infection is an important new element in the network of care and services for people living with HIV/AIDS in Massachusetts. It complements and expands upon existing coverage and services provided by a number of organizations in communities across the Commonwealth and programs of state and federal agencies, including the programs of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, such as the HIV Drug Assistance Program (HDAP), the Access to Care and Treatment Now (ACT Now) and Community Health Center Primary and HIV Specialty Care Programs, the Massachusetts Community AIDS Resource Enhancement (MassCARE), the HIV Counseling and Testing Program and the Needle Exchange Program.

How to Apply for MassHealth Coverage and Get Other Services

Information and applications (MBR) for MassHealth are available from the MassHealth Customer Service Center:

1-800-841-2900

(TTY: 00-497-4648)

MassHealth - DMA website for information and to download an application:

<http://www.state.ma.us/dma>

Income limits for MassHealth eligibility (based on federal guidelines, check with DMA for calculations under special circumstances and details):

Family Size	Monthly Income Limit
1	\$ 1,432
2	\$ 1,935
3	\$ 2,439
4	\$ 2,942
Each additional person add	\$504

Information about HIV Counseling and Testing:

1 (800) 750-2016

HIV Drug Assistance Program:

1 (800) 228-2714

**"Reach for it,
Get tested, Get Care."**



MASSACHUSETTS HIV/AIDS SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

HIV/AIDS SUMMARY REPORT

ALIVE CASES AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2001

Total Cases Reported In November, 2001				AIDS: 60		HIV: 43	
Massachusetts		HIV		AIDS		HIV/AIDS	
		5,678		7,541		13,219 *	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
RESIDENCE**		5,667		7,541		13,208	
HSR	Boston	1,779	31.3%	2,451	32.5%	4,230	32.0%
	Central	477	8.4%	676	9.0%	1,153	8.7%
	MetroWest	693	12.2%	918	12.2%	1,611	12.2%
	Northeast	756	13.3%	1,077	14.3%	1,833	13.9%
	Southeast	793	14.0%	1,068	14.2%	1,861	14.1%
	Western	694	12.2%	854	11.3%	1,548	11.7%
	Subtotal	5,192	91.4%	7,044	93.4%	12,236	92.6%
	Prisoners***	475	8.4%	497	6.6%	972	7.4%
MODE OF EXPOSURE (adults)		5,678		7,451		13,129	
	Male Sex w/Male	1,935	34.1%	2,254	30.3%	4,189	31.9%
	Injection Drug Use	1,762	31.0%	2,707	36.3%	4,469	34.0%
	Male/Male Sex & IDU	176	3.1%	250	3.4%	426	3.2%
	Receipt of blood/products	22	0.4%	121	1.6%	143	1.1%
	Heterosexual Sex	713	12.6%	954	12.8%	1,667	12.7%
	Presumed Het-Unk Risk of Prtnr*	793	14.0%	874	11.7%	1,667	12.7%
	Undetermined/Other	277	4.9%	291	3.9%	568	4.3%
MODE OF EXPOSURE (pediatric)		—		90		—	
	Mother w/AIDS/at risk for HIV	—	—	75	83.3%	—	—
	Receipt of blood/products	—	—	7	7.8%	—	—
	Undetermined	—	—	8	8.9%	—	—
GENDER		5,678		7,541		13,219	
	Male	3,942	69.4%	5,593	74.2%	9,535	72.1%
	Female	1,736	30.6%	1,948	25.8%	3,684	27.9%
RACE/ETHNICITY		5,678		7,541		13,219	
	White	2,816	49.6%	3,603	47.8%	6,419	48.6%
	Black	1,363	24.0%	2,027	26.9%	3,390	25.6%
	Hispanic	1,384	24.4%	1,818	24.1%	3,202	24.2%
	Other/Unknown	115	2.0%	93	1.2%	208	1.6%
AGE AT DIAGNOSIS‡		5,678		7,541		—	
	Under 13	—	—	78	1.0%	—	—
	13 - 19	120	2.1%	41	0.5%	—	—
	20 - 29	1,553	27.4%	1,104	14.6%	—	—
	30 - 39	2,574	45.3%	3,621	48.0%	—	—
	40 - 49	1,149	20.2%	2,132	28.3%	—	—

*Total includes cases with unknown city/town

**These numbers only include residents of Massachusetts. Non-residents diagnosed at a Massachusetts health facility are not included

HSR = Health Service Region. See <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/ohc/config.htm> for configurations

***Cases diagnosed while the individual is in a correctional facility.

* Risk of partner is unknown and primary risk categories have been denied; definition revised 7/1/99.

* HIV infection and the first AIDS-defining condition are not always diagnosed at the same point in time; age at diagnosis numbers are not combined when people who are HIV-infected only and those who have progressed to AIDS are described together.-Rev 7/1/2001

For more information, visit our website at: <http://www.state.ma.us/dph/cdc/aids/aidsprog.html>

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A Message to Health Care Providers

AIDS is designated as a reportable condition by regulation (105 CMR 300.000 et seq>). All health care providers diagnosing an AIDS case must report cases directly to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Accurate information on the incidence and clinical manifestations of AIDS is crucial for monitoring trends in the epidemic and for determining allocation of resources.

As of January 1, 1999, an amendment to the reportable disease regulations (105 CMR 300) was adopted to include HIV infection as a notifiable condition reportable directly to the department of public health using a non-name based system: no names are reported. The Adult AIDS confidential Case Report Form was updated to include HIV infection information. This single form to be used to report both HIV infection (without AIDS-defining conditions) and AIDS cases.

HIV/AIDS case information is protected by state and federal laws governing confidentiality of medical information. No names are ever released to anyone. HIV/AIDS case information is held in strict confidence. For reporting of HIV/AIDS cases meeting the CDC definition, please contact the HIV/AIDS Surveillance Staff at 617-983-6560.

HIV/AIDS Review is a free quarterly publication of the HIV/AIDS Bureau and HIV/AIDS Surveillance Program, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH, *Commissioner*

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Jean Flatley McGuire, Ph.D., *Director*

Website:

<http://www.state.ma.us/dph/aids>

AIDS Action Committee Hotline

(for information about support services that encourage independent living for people who are HIV+):

1-800-235-2331

Website:

<http://www.aac.org>

Bureau of Communicable Disease Control
Alfred DeMaria, Jr. MD *Assistant Commissioner*
(617) 983-6550

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